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SUBJECT: TOUR D'HORIZON OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN AFRICA

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Classified By: Political Counselor Walter N. Pflaumer. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. On 18 September, EmbOff met with members of the Institute for Security Studies' (ISS) Security Sector Governance Programme to discuss the state of peacekeeping operations on the African continent. The ISS team lamented the AU's lack of capacity, the international community's piece-meal approach to funding only peacekeeping operations (PKO) to the detriment of other aspects of security like troop preparedness and peace-building, and the absence of vision for Africa since former South African President Mbeki and former Nigerian President Obasanjo's departure. Looking forward, the ISS argued that political willingness to contribute to PKOs on the continent are likely to diminish and that the African Union will continue to flounder without a complete revamping of priorities. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) On 18 September, EmbOff met with the Institute of Security Studies' (ISS) Security Sector Programme team to discuss the current state of peacekeeping operations (PKOs) on the continent. In attendance were Dr. Naison Ngoma, Programme Head and a former AU official, Dr. Paul Simon Handy, Programme Head of ISS' African Security Analysis Programme, and Colonel Stephen van Neel, who recently joined the ISS as a senior researcher after spending 21 years in the South African National Defence Force, part of which time he was Sector Commander in AMIS and Chief of Staff Cease-fire Commission in UNAMID. The entire team praised the US for its contributions to PKOs on the continent, but also was critical of donor approaches in general, noting that they are not undertaken holistically, noting they along with the AU focus too much on peacekeeping, rather than peace-building and force readiness.

AFRICAN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS: THE FIRE BRIGADE APPROACH

13. (C) ISS members all believe the African Union (AU)'s approach to peacekeeping, while getting better, has a long way to go. Three key themes of shortcomings emerged:

-- Lack of framework: van Neel said he is concerned with the overall architecture of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) because key pillars of security outside PKOs, such as general troop preparedness, are being neglected. He also noted that the PSC does not pay enough attention to conflict prevention, nor do they play a role in the AU's policy making process. Handy added that the AU has not placed enough emphasis on development, and likely will not because there is still too much international pressure and incentive to

continue the AU's emphasis on resolution rather than prevention.

-- Lack of capacity: All criticized the AU's lack of capacity at every level, highlighting not only the management and direction of running an effective PKO, but also day-to-day administrative issues. Funding and political will of the AU PSC does not seem to be a problem, but rather differing levels of experience of AU working level officials. Van Neel noted in particular that the PSC appears unable to detect and deal with problems before they get out of hand, which Ngoma summed up as the AU's "fire-brigade approach." Handy added that it is also unclear how the AU PSC prioritizes issues. Qthat it is also unclear how the AU PSC prioritizes issues. All suggested that donors would get more for their money if it could be filtered down to working-levels of the AU.

-- Lack of funding for African militaries: All blamed the donor community for funding PKOs at the neglect of other more basic security needs. Ngoma noted manpower is not the issue since there are over 3 million men "under arms" on the continent, but that African militaries continue to be hampered by lack of funding and logistics needed to contribute to PKOs, most notably airlift equipment.

UN HYBRIDS SHORTFALLS

14. (C) Turning to Sudan, van Neel was critical of how UN 'hybridization' in general, but especially in Sudan, has unfolded, though not necessarily the concept. He believes increasing a PKO mandate and then re-hatting peacekeepers has had no impact. "Wearing a green beret one day, then a blue one the next doesn't change anything," he said. Likewise,

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elevating a mission's importance or mandate on paper doesn't guarantee results on the ground. Ngoma also added that hybridization does not address other problems like government obstruction as is the case in Sudan. Having said that, however, van Neel admitted the UN has a better system than the AU with better intelligence.

PKOS SUFFER FROM LACK OF VISION, FUNDING, AND COMMITMENT

15. (C) Handy sees an emerging trend of African governments becoming more reticent to contribute to PKOs. South Africa and Nigeria, he said, are the most prominent examples and at the same time, the two most important contributors to PKOs on the continent. "Remove Nigeria from the equation and West African PKOs disappear, remove South Africa and all PKOs would suffer," he said. (NOTE: Dr. Ngoma took issue with Handy's analysis, arguing that smaller African countries, like Rwanda and Ghana, are just as important. END NOTE) Handy believes the lack of willingness to engage on South Africa's and Nigeria's part is a direct result of the change of leadership in these countries. Both former Nigerian President Obasanjo and former South African President Mbeki had visions for Africa which they could articulate, he said. AU Chairman Qadhafi, he said, does not have a vision, but will nevertheless have an enormous impact on the AU because Qadhafi faces no real challengers. (NOTE: Handy mentioned there is much talk about Angola's recent attempts to be seen as a player on the continent, though he admitted that Angolan remains a black hole to him. "All we know is that they can win wars," to which Ngoma quipped, "or at least how not to lose them." Handy said everyone agrees that "Angola is in the room, but never speaks." As a result, Handy said no one can articulate what Angola exactly wants. END NOTE)

16. (C) Handy also argued that regional bodies like SADC and ECOWAS, however, still have potential, though they lack funding. Handy argued that ECOWAS, and Nigeria for driving

it, have not gotten the recognition they deserve because in many ways, he said, ECOWAS has been even more advanced than the AU at creating an institutional framework, even to the point where some states have even given up part of their sovereignty to ECOWAS. Ngoma also noted that there is recognition by military commanders all over the continent that they need to harmonize their doctrines, procedures, and execution of operations if they are to be successful in multi-national PKOs. He also added there is keen interest on ECOWAS' part in doing a joint military planning exercise like the ongoing SADC brigade exercise, but they are waiting for funding. (NOTE: SADC is holding a multi-national military exercise in South Africa from 1 to 29 September to increase the readiness of its forces in accordance with the AU roadmap toward establishing the SADC Brigade. END NOTE)

AMISON ATTACK AN INTELLIGENCE FAILURE

17. (C) The timing of the Embassy's meeting took place the day after the 17 September suicide attack on AMISON in Mogadishu and all ISS members were focused on the future of AMISON. Van Neel called the attack an "intelligence failure," and all QVan Neel called the attack an "intelligence failure," and all agreed that the attack is likely to make AMISON less effective because peacekeepers will now likely restrict themselves to the base. Ngoma also believes that it might make other countries hesitant to contribute troops to Somalia or other hotspots in the future. All also noted that the Shebab Islamist movement was in the process of fragmenting, but that Saleh Nabhan's death has given the movement a morale boost and an opportunity to regroup again with renewed hatred for the US as a common enemy. END NOTE)
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